

Committee nears decision on bridge/train station art

Meeting set for Dec. 9

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Committee members who will soon choose a sculpture to be installed at the base of the new Lititz Pike bridge have their work cut out for them.

The appointed committee selected three proposals from the 26 submitted by artists nationwide for the \$200,000 commission.

Committee members are expected to meet Dec. 9 to choose between 42 wind sculptures with spinning copper blades, an illuminated blue-glass star or swirls of metals cut with the words and languages of community residents.

The star, by Maryland artist Judy Moore, is favored by people voting on the LancasterArts Facebook page.

The kinetic wind sculpture, by Utah artist Lyman Whitaker, got the most votes based on comments submitted after a public presentation this week.

And the word-cut metal swirls, of artist Suikang Zhao, trailed in the Facebook voting, but was favored over Moore's star by people at the meeting who heard from the artist.

In an online poll by Lancaster Online earlier this month, a fourth choice "none of the above," was second in the voting.

"With all three pieces I find myself asking: 'what about this piece says "Lancaster"?' " was one comment made at the public presentation Tuesday.

About 25 people attended the meeting in Southern Market Center.

While all three proposals had support in the audience, other people were looking for artwork that would represent the community. Plans call for it to be placed on the southwest side of the new, \$26.2 million bridge, which will be a gateway into the city.



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Noting Whitaker's distinctive, "signature style" of wind sculptures, one audience member noted that it could look like Lancaster, but only until York decided to commission Whitaker to do a project there.

Another man noted that Moore's blue star didn't seem representative of the Red Rose City.

"I'm not sure why something that looks like a Moravian star represents Lancaster," said one woman, who suggested that it may be better sited in Lititz or Bethlehem.

Zhao, a native of China who came from New York for the presentation, acknowledged that his swirl sculpture may be the hardest to visualize.

That is because it needs the input of the community. He would go to community centers, schools and even prisons to solicit ideas for the words and phrases that would be cut into the internally lit steel sculpture.

He would also seek to have the words in the sculpture in the languages spoken by the people who have made Lancaster their home.

"The future of art is that it belongs to the people," he said. "I want people to tell their children, grandchildren in the future: 'That's my words.' "

Tracy Beyl, the city's public arts manager, responded to questions about why no local artists were selected among the finalists.

She said 11 local artists submitted proposals. All 26 proposals were ranked by committee members who considered the artists' experience doing projects of similar scale, and who had previously worked with transportation projects and with several government entities.

The artwork will be done in conjunction with the PennDOT bridge project, adjacent to the Amtrak rails and station, and with Lancaster city and Manheim Township officials.

The project is the largest attempted since the city established its Public Art Advisory Board three years ago.

The city is seeking a pair of \$100,000 grants to fund the commission. If funding is received, the artwork would be installed after the completion of the new bridge in May.

source: LancasterOnline.com